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NOVEMBER 1954

**Pseudo-Retardation in Retrolental Fibroplasia**

**and**

**Two Essential Factors in the Development of Young Blind Children**
*Jane Hallenbeck, M.D.*

**Rate of Motion and Object Perception in the Blind**
*Bruce McCarty and Philip Worchel*

**Vol. 48, No. 9**

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THE NEW OUTLOOK FOR THE BLIND
VOLUME 48 *NOVEMBER 1954* NUMBER 9

# Pseudo-Retardation in Retrolental Fibroplasia

JANE HALLENBECK, M.D.

OVER A PERIOD OF TWO and one half years, eighteen children, ages three to six years, with a diagnosis of retrolental fibroplasia were referred to the Children's Psychiatric Clinic at the Massachusetts General Hospital. (From the Child Psychiatry Service, Massachusetts General Hospital and Department of Psychiatry and Pediatrics, Harvard Medical School.)

These cases represented the more severely disturbed and retarded of a much larger group of children with retrolental fibroplasia, most of whom had similar difficulties but to a much less marked degree. It is pertinent to the theoretical evaluation of this problem to note that all but three of these 18 children were totally blind, not having even light perception, as far as could be determined ophthalmologically.

The developmental histories and behavior patterns of these severely disturbed blind children are similar to those found in mentally defective children. Each step in development is retarded (see charts on pp. 306-307). In addition to the retardation in motor development, there is a reluctance on the part of all of these children to eat solid food, and many refuse to give up the bottle. These and other problems seen in the more retarded blind children, are seen to a less severe degree, and mainly surmounted, in better adjusted blind children.

When first seen, children with retrolental fibroplasia appear similar to each other, with their seemingly bulging foreheads and small sunken eyes. At about one year of age, they begin to hold their hands to their eyes and poke at their eyes with their fingers. This type of activity occurs especially at times of stress. In addition to this constant pattern, different combinations of hand slapping, head banging, screaming, teeth-grinding, or biting, and rocking back and forth, are seen in blind children. Often these children engage in twirling movements of their entire body. They show a preference for a position of opisthotonos, or enjoy hanging with their head downward. Some of them have a tendency to act as though there were a reversal of day and night. These same mannerisms are seen in better adjusted blind children to a less severe degree and with less persistence than in the more disturbed ones. Three of the sicker children showed apathy and a reluctance to be disturbed from

Studies on which this work is based were supported by a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health, United States Public Health Service, Bethesda, Maryland.



Officers, Delegates and Visitors, Meeting of World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, Paris, 1954.

their withdrawn state. This apathy is in contrast to the attitude of those children who have achieved motility and show evident pleasure in body motion and posturing.

In the patients referred for severe problems a striking similarity in the relationship to the family was noted. It was especially true of the mother-child relationship. Whether the blind child was the first in the family or had older siblings, the mother was slow to notice anything wrong with the child, and, after admitting it to herself, was especially slow to seek medical confirmation of her fear. In each case, at the time of premature delivery, the mother was told that either she, the child, or both might not live. It was under these conditions of extreme stress that the mother first viewed the blind child. One mother expressed a common feeling in saying of her child, "It was so little. It wasn't human and it might not live. I felt all mixed up about it and funny because I couldn't love it."

**Emotional Impact on Mothers**

Following this introduction the children were separated from the mothers for varying periods of time, as the children had to remain in the hospital because of their small size. During the first month at home the children did not develop normally and give gratification to the mother by responding to her as eagerly as a sighted child. Without exception, at a later date, each mother was repeatedly told by professional personnel and by others who saw her child, that the child was mentally deficient or that the child had "brain disease," and would not live long. All factors—a fearful delivery followed by separation, a slowly developing child, the diagnosis of retrolental fibroplasia, and finally a diagnosis of mental deficiency—progressively interfered with the relationship between the mother and child. Most of these mothers expressed helplessness with the blind child. Some developed a hostile reaction with open rejection, wishing the child would die, or wanting to be rid of it. Others showed marked over-protection, allowing the child to do nothing and leaving him in his crib constantly "so that he would not get hurt." There was a tendency on the part of all these mothers to leave the blind child isolated in his crib, where the child at first appeared quite contented and demanded nothing beyond the satisfaction of his physical needs.

With regard to the rejection of the blind child, two types of situations could be made out. Some mothers rejected only this specific child because of his defects and needs. Other mothers because of their own immaturity or neurosis, found it difficult to handle family relationships in general, a situation which was then exaggerated by the addition of a blind child.

In this study, concerned primarily with the most severely disturbed children, it was felt that the most important finding was that these children were able to make a series of developmental steps forward and to lose or decrease their mannerisms solely as the result of an improvement in their emotional surroundings. The environmental improvement was accomplished by weekly therapeutic sessions with the child, by psychotherapy and/or case work with the mother, and by the assistance of the preschool teacher visiting in the home. *The pronounced change in most of these cases in the level of functioning as a result of improved human relationships is stressed because it is the main evidence refuting the commonly stated opinion that the severe retardation in development of all retrolental fibroplasia children is due either to the blindness itself or to some organic brain lesion.*

### A Case Study

One case which illustrates this work is that of Jackie, a twin who has no vision.* (His twin Barbara, can see objects. She has shown only the usual degree of problems for a blind child, although she has some mannerisms to a greater degree than would be expected for her amount of vision.) The twins are the youngest in a family of eight children, all of the other siblings being girls. Jackie's mother states that she first noticed there was something wrong with him when he was nine months old. (She first noticed something was wrong with Barbara at six months.) At that time he preferred to lie in his crib motionless and did not reach for any objects. He showed no interest in sitting and would only take his bottle and a few strained foods. At eleven months she took him to a doctor, who told her that he was markedly retarded and seemed to have some eye difficulty. Only after three other doctors recommended it did she consult an ophthalmologist, bringing Jackie to the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary when he was nineteen months old.

### Mother's Reaction to the Diagnosis

At that time a diagnosis of retrolental fibroplasia was made. He had made no developmental progress in the preceding ten months. Although at the time of diagnosis no reference was made to his retardation, the mother immediately replied to the diagnosis of retrolental fibroplasia by saying, "Then he is no good and hopeless." She did not return for scheduled check-ups for several months.

At home Jackie was left lying in his crib without toys and was handled only to care for his physical needs. He would sometimes hold his breath, scream and go into the opisthotonos position. This behavior did not seem related to any external stimuli, but seemed to give him pleasure. He seemed content to lie quietly much of the time. It may be speculated that there was no incentive for him to sit up, as he could hear as well lying down as sitting. With encouragement from his family he sat up at two years. He was saying a few words at two and one-quarter years, but verbalization stopped after about three months, without any known cause.

At three years of age he was admitted to the Burnham Memorial Hospital for Children, Massachusetts General Hospital, for organic and psychological appraisal of his development. When first seen he was a small boy, lying quietly in his crib with his back arched. After four days of four or five short visits a day, he gradually accepted the therapist. She treated him as a six-month-old infant. After nine days he began to say a few words in repetition after the therapist. At the end of his three-week hospital stay he showed some evidence of pleasure while being rocked and talked to, and made an effort to move in the direction of her voice. With the change that came about during his hospitalization, it was felt that at least part of his severe retardation was due to emotional factors.

### Jackie Makes Progress

In the next two years Jackie was seen about every two weeks for one hour, although opportunities were given for every week. He spent nearly one year with the therapist, exploring her features with his mouth and later with his hands. The incentive was his as he wanted to know her. After ten months he was gradually encouraged to stand and at first seemed to do so to please the therapist and receive praise. Slowly he began to find pleasure in it for him-

* Chart (1), page 306.

self. During nearly every hour he would hold his breath and scream. He rocked back and forth on the lap of the therapist almost constantly, he ground his teeth and poked at his eyes under any stress. His favorite position was on his back over the knees of the therapist with head and heels on the floor. His first solid food was candy which he accepted from the therapist after trying it several months and spitting it out, or licking it from her hand. At four and one-half years he suddenly said, "Want candy," which was the first verbal request he had ever made.

Therapeutic sessions held every two weeks were interrupted at five years of age and Jackie has been seen at about six-month intervals thereafter. He has maintained the progress which he made and verbalizes some few wishes, but has made little progress in new ways, other than that which he made during the more frequent therapeutic sessions.

It will be noted that from an infant level, when chronologically three years of age, he developed until he could verbalize a wish and could take a few steps with help. His characteristic mannerisms markedly decreased. So far as could be determined, these developmental steps followed upon changes in his emotional environment. This fact led us to believe that his severe developmental backwardness was not solely the result of blindness or brain damage but resulted from lack of environmental and human contact, with its stimulation by handling and verbal encouragement.

During the time the mother and child were being seen, the mother alternated between the hope that he would progress and the hope that he would be declared so mentally defective as to justify placement in an institution for the feeble-minded. In her talks with the social worker she revealed that all of her children had marked neurotic tendencies of a nature that pointed to an emotionally insecure and immature family group.

### Importance of Emotional Factor

Of the eighteen children studied, two have been placed in schools for the mentally defective, and one in a state hospital because of self-destructive tendencies. Of the ten children studied most intensively, all but two have made progress, some very dramatically, others more slowly. From the degree of generalized developmental progress an estimate of the considerable degree of emotional retardation at the onset of treatment could be made. It is also of considerable interest that these children, with the exception of certain areas of motor development, closely resemble sighted children with profound developmental and social disturbances on an emotional basis.

In view of the existence of this degree of developmental retardation of emotional origin, no test of the innate intelligence of these children would appear to be adequate. This fact would seem to be necessarily so because intelligence tests at this age are based on various indications of developmental progress. The Maxfield-Fjeld adaptation of the Vineland Social Maturity Scale comes closest to being a useful scale for blind children, but even here without correction of the impeding emotional factors a correct estimate of the child's capabilities cannot be made.

A completely separate study, "Two Essential Factors in the Development of Young Blind Children,"* was carried on at Perkins Institution. This study concerned itself with twenty-two kindergarten children who had already reached the developmental level which is required for entrance into this residential school. They were able to partially dress and feed themselves as well as

* See pages 308-315.

care for, or make known, their toilet needs. In this study, developmental data were obtained.

The accompanying chart which is used to illustrate the comparative developmental rates of the following three groups of children may be briefly explained: (2) Those children who were referred to the psychiatric clinic at the Massachusetts General Hospital and who could not enter Perkins Institution because of continued retarded development. (3) Those children who had been referred previously to the Massachusetts General Hospital for psychotherapy and who are now at Perkins Institution. (4) Those children who are at Perkins Institution but were never seen in psychotherapy. The children listed in the chart with the exception of two, as noted, were all totally blind since birth. (The remaining children in the kindergarten group, not included in the chart, had light perception or large object vision.)

This study seems to confirm the studies previously done with totally blind children at an earlier age. It was noted that the totally-blind children at Perkins, as a group, presented more problems and did not make the same academic progress as the children with more vision.

In the accompanying chart two differences are noted in comparing the factual data on the three groups of totally blind children. First, the mother's attitude toward the child varies in the three groups. The mothers' attitudes toward the children who did not obtain developmental levels sufficient for them to enter Perkins Institution is in contrast with the attitudes of the mothers of those children who are doing well at Perkins. Secondly, the age at which confirmation of the ophthalmological diagnosis was sought varies from four months to nineteen months, with a tendency evident for earlier confirmation of the diagnosis in the children who ultimately progress better.

## Conclusions

1. A group of eighteen preschool totally blind children showed severe retardation of their general development which was felt to be in considerable part on an emotional basis and which was altered by psychiatric techniques in all but three cases.

2. The case study which is entered shows the early need of the blind child to be stimulated by handling and vocal encouragement. This need is more pronounced in the blind child than in the sighted.

3. In these cases a disturbed relationship of the mother to the child was found. The mother's capacity to give attention and affection appeared below average and the child's needs for attention and affection appeared above average quantitatively, as well as rather special qualitatively.

4. If the mother does not seek ophthalmological attention until late one becomes suspicious of the mother's relationship to the child and her ability to deal with the diagnosis.

5. Severe developmental retardation does not appear to be due to blindness itself or to organic brain disease in most of these cases, since this retardation can be altered by improving human contacts with the child.

(1) Barbara and Jackie (Not At Perkins Institution)
(Case history)

| Categories | Barbara | Jackie |
|---|---|---|
| Amount of vision | Large objects | Nil |
| Birth weight | 2 lbs. 7 oz. | 2 lbs. 12 oz. |
| Medical diagnosis of eye condition | 19 mos. | 19 mos. |
| Mother's attitude | Fair | Very poor |
| Walking | 1 yr. 6 mos. | 3 yrs. 6 mos. |
| Talking | 1 yr. 4 mos. | 3 yrs. |
| Toilet trained | 3 yrs. 6 mos. | Not |
| Mannerisms | Moderate number | Many |
| Progress—or School adjustment | Just entered school | Little progress since therapy ended |

(2) Retarded Group Not At Perkins Institution

| Categories | Gordon | Helen | Irma |
|---|---|---|---|
| Amount of vision | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| Birth weight | 2 lbs. 13 oz. | 4 lbs. 1 oz. | 2 lbs. 3 oz. |
| Medical diagnosis of eye condition | 8 mos. | 9 mos. | after 1 year |
| Mother's attitude | Very poor Placed two times | Very poor Placement in 6 foster homes | Very poor Placement in 11 foster homes |
| Walking | 4 years | 3 yrs. 10 mos. | 2½ years** |
| Talking | 2 yrs. 7 mos. | 2 yrs. 6 mos.* | 3 years** |
| Toilet trained | Not | Not | 5½ years |
| Mannerisms | Many | Many | Many |
| Progress—or School adjustment | Slow but steady progress since foster home placement | School for mentally retarded | Slow progress in present foster home |

*Stopped speaking after T & A at 3 yrs. Hasn't spoken since

**Many regressions to no activity with foster home changes

(3) Retarded Group Now At Perkins Institution

| Categories | Katherine | Lawrence |
|---|---|---|
| Amount of vision | Nil | Light perception |
| Birth weight | 3 lbs. 14 oz. | 3 lbs. 7 oz. |
| Medical diagnosis of eye condition | 6 mos. | 5 mos. |
| Mother's attitude | Poor | Fairly good |
| Walking | 3 years | 20 mos. |
| Talking | 4 years | 3 yrs. 7 mos. |
| Toilet trained | 3½ years | 5 years |
| Mannerisms | Many | Many |
| Progress—or School adjustment | Repeat Kindergarden at Perkins | Slow 1st grade |

(4) Perkins Institution Pupils Who Were Not Referred

| Categories | Mary | Ned | Paul | Frances |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Amount of vision | Nil | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| Birth weight | 3 lbs. 9 oz. | 3 lbs. 4 oz. | 2 lbs. 9 oz. | 3 lbs. 3 oz. |
| Medical diagnosis of eye condition | 4 mos. | Late | 7 mos. | 4 mos. |
| Mother's attitude | Fair | Poor | Fair | Excellent |
| Walking | 1 yr. 6 mos. | 2 yrs. 6 mos. | 21 mos. | 18 mos. |
| Talking | 1 yr. 6 mos. | 4 years | — — | 2 yrs. 6 mos. |
| Toilet trained | 4 years | 3 yrs. 6 mos. | 5 years | 2 years |
| Mannerisms | Many | Many | Moderate number | Some |
| Progress—or School adjustment | Slow 1st grade | Repeating Kindergarten | Slow 1st Grade | Highest 1st grade |

# Two Essential Factors in the Development of Young Blind Children

JANE HALLENBECK, M.D.

WITH THE ALARMING increase of blindness due to retrolental fibroplasia in premature infants in recent years many cases have shown slow development and this has caused anxiety to those people dealing with young blind children. Many of these children are severe behavior problems similar to those of emotionally disturbed sighted children. Now a considerable number of these children are of school age and the group at Perkins Institution and Massachusetts School for the Blind in the fall of 1950 included so many cases of disturbed emotional adjustment that it was decided to make a special psychological study of them, comparing fourteen retrolental children with eight others whose blindness was due to other causes. All of these children had met fairly well the entrance requirements: they were able to partially dress themselves; to care for or make known their toilet needs; and to feed themselves. They varied in age from five to eight years. All were housed in one cottage and thus had contact with the same personnel.

Shortly after the study began it became apparent that a multitude of factors must be considered and methods were developed to gather as much information as possible. But two factors constantly emerged as fundamental: (1) the amount of visual loss and (2) the question of whether the child had established a good relationship with some person before entering Perkins.

### PROGRAM OF STUDY

1. One psychiatrist interviewed each child at the beginning and at the end of the year and attempted a crude evaluation of progress. Each week during the year another psychiatrist* observed the group as a whole and children with specific problems were seen individually as the need was indicated. These two psychiatrists combined their observations using as a guide for the formation of an estimate of the child's adaptability and personality a list of ten arbitrary categories. (See *Appendix* I)

2. The teachers and house personnel were asked to make out reports on each child, covering the ten personality traits listed in *Appendix* II.

3. A social worker visited the homes of all but one of the children to collect the data on personal history, home environment and paternal attitudes. (See *Appendix* III)

4. At the beginning and the end of the year a psychometrist used the In-

* Dr. Cornelius Lansing, a fellow at the Massachusetts General Hospital in the Child Psychiatry Department, collaborated in this report.

terim Hayes-Binet Intelligence Test for the Blind to determine each child's MA and IQ.

### Brief Report on Individual Children

Problem behavior can often be traced to specific relationships in the home environment. Alan, for instance, (age 6, retrolental fibroplasia, light perception) appeared to be a fairly adequate little boy, but when his home background was reviewed, it was discovered that his mother had had little contact with him, and this was mostly of a restrictive nature. One wondered how he had managed to develop so well when most children with the same degree of maternal rejection failed to do so. Further investigation, however, showed that there was an employee in the home who was extremely fond of him and gave him the utmost of her time and teaching. At school Alan was at first a mild nonconformist; at times attacking other children without apparent provocation, and living in a fantasy world whenever left alone. He was found wandering over doorsteps and out of doors or investigating high places whenever the opportunity presented itself.

The drive which was present in this boy perhaps can be related to his very positive but stimulating relationship with the employee. The stepping over doorways and investigating high places could be related to his restricted investigation at home where his mother, who valued material things very highly, did not allow him over certain thresholds. The other children in the family were allowed there as they were not as clumsy as the blind child; they were also permitted to handle the objects of material value. It was found that his attacks on other children were made when they were, in his estimation, holding some object.

As the year progressed these troublesome traits diminished and an extreme interest in small objects and animals materialized. Whereas at the beginning of the school year he was only a fringe member of the group, he became a consultant on small natural things and his interest was channeled into productive lines.

Another case was Betsy, (age 7, retrolental fibroplasia, light perception, right eye). She was admitted to the school by special arrangement as she could not walk, although she was capable in some degree in other requirements. Her mother could no longer have her at home because of her own neurotic difficulties, and although she tried, could not accept this child. The child had been in foster homes on three occasions before coming to school. When at home she was left in her crib or restricted to a chair, since her mother preferred to keep her a baby. Then the mother would become impatient with her slow development and place her in a foster home only to ask for her return after several months' stay.

At school, Betsy presented a problem of physical development and, because of her small frame and slight build, spent the year learning physical accomplishments. She tried very hard to keep up with the group and was soon walking. All of her energy, at first, was channeled into this activity. Later, she became anxious under the pressure that she felt and showed symptoms of her anxiety by masturbating frequently and openly. As she was allowed to progress more at her own rate and became more proficient in physical skills, this symptom diminished.

An entirely different type of problem was presented by Caroline (age 7, optic atrophy, 10/200 vision) who was at the first part of the school year a shy, withdrawn little girl who would occasion-

ally bite or scratch anyone near her. She spoke only repetitiously and never used the pronoun "I." As the year progressed, Caroline became even more of a problem. She began talking simple nonsense and appeared as completely detached from reality as a hebephrenic.

Soon she began to scream and would attack one other child who would scream at her approach. As this symptom diminished, Caroline became more able to scream herself and became very disobedient. With this latter development, however, she began to talk more sensibly and at times expressed a wish or, more frequently, gave a negativistic answer. Unfortunately, toward the end of the school year, when she was screaming more but making progress in all other areas, she had a tonsillectomy. When she returned to school after this operation, she had reverted to her previous behavior in a more severe form. Gradually this diminished and she made positive gains before the end of the school year, but did not reach the level that she had attained prior to her operation.

If we look at Caroline's home background, we find that she lived in a home of a very domineering, professionally-trained grandmother, where her own mother and father never expressed their wishes or feeling. She was never allowed to make noises for fear the family would be evicted. In school, noise made by herself and others was a new experience and a fascinating one. She had never had the normal shouting of childhood, which is perhaps an exaggerated need in a blind child. She had to catch up in the area of vocalization before she could think of herself as a person who could produce anything. Unfortunately the tonsillectomy was interpreted by her as punishment for making noise and it was only by reassurance that she was able to start again. To quote: "Scream—Throat hurt?—Don't make any noise—You be quiet . . ." (commands to herself) "Throat hurts" (statement). Since then she has made more progress but still remains somewhat withdrawn.

Another picture is that of Danny (age 7, buphthalmos, good traveling vision) who had severe temper tantrums and was filled with bravado. At the same time there was a quality of demanding attention and love. Danny was a boy who was rated well-adjusted and who did excellent work in school.

His family is rather a "rough one" where his blindness was capitalized on as a way of getting things, such as money, groceries, etc. He was definitely lacking in the subtle social graces and was accustomed to violent outbursts of emotion. It seemed that he felt particularly the lack of attention and so demanded a great deal of it at school.

Danny's behavior was characterized, particularly, by bravado until he was hospitalized for an eye operation. At that time he lost his defense of control and regressed to a curled-up, little ball, hiding under the pillow, crying constantly and refusing to eat. At further hospitalizations during the year this was less evident and he was particularly pleased at having another boy from the school hospitalized with him. Each time he returned to the school from the hospital he was more demanding and bossy. This behavior gradually diminished. It was hard for some people to tolerate his clinging qualities as he was such a mature and adequate-appearing little boy.

Another extremely well-adjusted boy, Edward, (retinoblastoma, with bilateral enucleations at age three, now age five) became very mischievous especially over certain week-ends, and at times during the week. His episodes included breaking all the things in the medicine closet,

throwing all the tooth brushes but his own down the toilet, etc.

Edward's parents lived a long way from the school so that he could not go home week-ends as most of the other children did. He made successful transference of positive feelings to a specific house-mother and it was when she was off duty or when he was angry with her that these mischievous episodes occurred. When she brought him a small present after her time off, as a secret between the two of them, he became more reconciled to his week-ends at school. An understanding on the part of the staff concerning the reason for his behavior also assisted in making his week-ends more satisfying.

Edward had full vision until three years of age, and thus has stored within himself an adequate concept of the world around so his orientation, geographically, and to others is good. His problems, although causing difficulty in the cottage, were primarily normal, mischievous behavior.

In this group there is one outstanding exception to the hypothesis below, that development is positively correlated with amount of vision.

Frances, (age 5½, retrolental fibroplasia, no vision) shows clearly that complete blindness is not the only factor in retarded development. Frances behaves like a sighted child. She has a very normal, imaginative, real play life with her dolls and toys. She gets along well with the other children and usually conforms to discipline. She is a leader in games and has a great deal of initiative in her own activities. Although shy with strangers, she carries on a well oriented conversation.

Frances comes from a home where her blindness was accepted as a challenge. She has had a normal play life with her siblings, and her parents have used a very natural way with her; yet have expected her to do certain things as the other children in the family did.

### Study of These Children as a Group

These cases are used to illustrate the various types of problems that arose during the school year and to show that they were, to some extent, related to their home environment or the actual school situation, as with Edward. With the exception of Caroline, all had an adequate vocabulary to express their wishes and she did eventually. It is also hoped that these cases show how each child appeared as an individual. If, on the other hand, we attempt to group them together under various categories, and consider the importance of the amount of vision they have, we find the following:

Of the twenty-two children in the group, ten had no vision.

Of the ten children with no vision, five were promoted to the first grade. (One of these was the child who had vision until three years of age.)

Of the five who remained in the kindergarten, three had no vision and the other two had extremely poor home backgrounds—Caroline and Betsy.

Five were in a trial group prior to first grade—two of whom had no vision.

Of the fifteen who spoke normally, five had no vision and ten had light perception or better. Of the seven who were not able to carry on a conversation consistently four had no vision and three had light perception.

Of the ten children with no vision, six had good contact with reality—two had occasional contact and two had no contact with reality. Of the twelve with vision, eight had good contact, four had only occasional, none had no contact.

#### Adaptation in the Group

Leaders: three with vision and one blinded at three years of age.

Followers: five with vision and four with no vision.

Fringe members of the group: two with no vision and one with vision.

Isolated from the group: four with no vision and two with vision.

Special problems to school administration: four with no vision presented developmental problems needing special attention and individual care in the resident cottage and classroom situation; four with vision presented these problems. One with no vision (vision to age three) and one with vision presented normal mischievous behavior for their age. The remainder were, in general an overtly passive compliant group.

If we arbitrarily limit our study to these four categories, we find a strong relationship between the amount of vision and the relationship established in the home environment to the general adaptability of the child. With the exception of Frances, none of the children who were totally blind since birth ( Edward blind at three years) made first grade. At the other end of the scale we have four children totally blind since birth, and two with inadequate home background, who made primary school adjustments, but were unable to progress and remained more or less isolated in their own fantasies.

### Evidence from Standard Mental Measurements

To supplement our social and psychiatric study an attempt was made to measure the potential intellectual ability of each child at the beginning of the year, and to determine the progress of development by re-testing at the end of the year. A recent study at Perkins Institution had shown that when young, blind children have attained enough facility with language to be tested with the Interim Hayes-Binet Intelligence Test, the distribution of IQ's of retrolental fibroplasia cases (65 in number) was similar to the distribution of IQ's of children blinded from other causes (141 in number) with similar ranges of IQ and the same median IQ. Similarly a comparison of social quotients obtained through the use of the Maxfield-Fjeld Adaptation of the Vineland Social Maturity Scale with 145 retrolental fibroplasia babies and 155 babies blinded from other causes, showed no marked differences in distribution or mean scores. We have no reason to assume, among those who could be tested, that blindness due to retrolental fibroplasia will be associated with either higher or lower native abilities than blindness resulting from other causes.

This seems to be true of the small groups involved in this study. The range of scores of the two groups at their first testing was similar, the highest IQ being obtained by Frances (an RLF) and the two lowest IQ's being obtained by Betsy (an RLF) and Caroline (optic atrophy). Nor was there a significant difference in the range of scores when the children were divided into those blind and those with some vision. Re-testing at the end of the year showed an increase of 22 IQ points in one extreme case with a small loss of IQ scores in five other cases. On the whole the intelligence tests of these children added little to the study, perhaps because many of them were not ready for a purely verbal test; perhaps because in many cases intellectual processes were inhibited or obscured by the emotional factors discovered in the psychiatric study.

The result of this study may indicate the need for certain changes in the education of children who are totally blind approximately from birth. It would seem that such children cannot be expected to develop normally unless they live in homes where their peculiar emotional needs are understood and exceptional opportunities for sensory and so-

cial stimulation are provided. Until the advent of retrolental fibroplasia, it was extremely rare to find a child totally blind from birth, and at the present writing there are in Perkins, outside of the kindergarten, only six children totally blind from birth. Each of these children has, throughout his education, presented and still presents, some difficult problem for the school. If such children cannot make satisfactory progress under the present regime, possibly radical changes in educational policy may be indicated.

### General Conclusions from This Study

1. Problems exhibited by children should be individualized as to etiology and handling.

2. A close positive relationship with some person seems to be a large factor in the rate of development and the ability to adjust.

3. The degree of closeness of this positive relationship has to be greater the less the vision the child has.

4. Children with some vision and disturbed home backgrounds show disturbances similar to those with better relationships and no vision.

5. A description of the degree and age of onset of blindness should precede any evaluation of a blind child. In general, it does not appear that expectations of development and adjustment should be the same for children with no vision, light perception and object vision.

## *Appendix* I

### *Outline for Psychiatric Evaluation*

1. Ego Boundaries: ability of child to distinguish himself from other persons or objects in his environment.
2. Fantasy: quantity (what proportion of child's thoughts it seemed to occupy); persistency (how easily can the child be brought in contact with reality from fantasy).
3. Relationship to Objects: whether child use things, or just handles or mouths them.
4. Adaptability to:
   A. Routine
   B. Unusual events or new people.
5. Amount of outward aggressiveness.
6. Preoccupations: self, home, surroundings (reality).
7. General Mood.
8. Intellectual Scope: orientation to world at large.
9. Geographical Orientation and Mobility (correlated with amount of sight).
10. Reaction in the Group (leader, follower, fringe member or isolationist).

## *Appendix* II

### *Personality Traits*

1. Cooperative (obedient to reasonable requests and demands).
2. Happy (free from tears, fears and temper tantrums).
3. Plays with other children.
4. Affectionate.
5. Righteous indignation (reaction of anger if unfairly treated).

6. Apparent comprehension of requests.
7. Pride or pleasure in own accomplishments.
8. Ability to carry on simple conversation.
9. Satisfactory maturation for chronological age (ability to take care of self such as eating, toilet needs, motor ability).
10. Ability to relax and outstanding number of mannerisms (this applies especially to mannerisms).

*Special Instructions*

A. Please fill in papers independently. Please do not collaborate with any other person rating these children.
B. When rating please specify degrees, such as: *very, moderate, slight* or *occasionally,* and *none.*
C. Please rate as of this week.
D. All reports are confidential!
E. Space for remarks is provided in case you wish to qualify your statement, such as: *cooperative; very; except when with Miss X.*

## *Appendix* III

### Data Collected by Social Worker

*Questionnaire of Family Background*

Name of child

Father_____Date of Birth_____Occupation_____Earnings_____

Mother_____Date of Birth_____Occupation_____Earnings_____

Dates Mother Employed_____Mother ever absent from home_____

Size of house_____Type of neighborhood_____

Occupants of house now_____

Other siblings, not at home (age and sex)
Any siblings who are deceased (age, sex, date of death)

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1. Other individuals who have had any significant relationship with this child, and when:
Previous residences, with dates:

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2. Attitude toward the child of:
Mother — Father
Siblings — Others
Grandparents

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3. Adequacy of:
a) Physical care of pupil — by
b) Interest — by
c) Praise, encouragement and affection — by

---

4. Training — by

---

5. Planning by

6. Management of child:
   a) Discipline by

7. Scolding by

8. Punishment: Type Amount by

9. Hostility or rejection

10. Child's reaction to discipline

11. Other items of importance:
    a) Special interests of child
    b) Mannerisms

12. Other Comments:

# Rate of Motion and Object Perception in the Blind

**BRUCE McCARTY**

**and**

**PHILIP WORCHEL**

IN 1950 THERE APPEARED an article in the Austin, Texas, *Sunday American Statesman* by Lorraine Barnes[1] which spoke of a blind nine-year-old boy who rides his bicycle ". . . amazingly, happily; . . . an every-day miracle . . ."

How can a blind boy ride a bicycle? How does he know when he is approaching an object? Can he still detect the objects when he approaches them rapidly?

Investigation has uncovered the answer to all the questions except those concerning speed of approach; so this experiment undertook to answer that one by investigating the boy who had developed his own "radar" system.

## Background

From 1749 until the present there has been much interest, speculation and investigation in the realm of object perception by the blind.

Theories based on pressure, physiological activity of the skin, the occult, temperature and audition have been put forward to explain this phenomenon, but until 1944 all of them except those dealing with the ears have been laid to rest by the experiments of Supa, Cotzin and Dallenbach.[2] They eliminated all stimulation except electronically controlled auditory signals; thus only two alternatives were possible: either the perception of objects by the blind depended on sound or on a little patch of skin in the ear canal which was sensitive to pressure.

To test the possibility of the latter, Worchel and Dallenbach ran studies[3] in 1947, using deaf-blind subjects who had no auditory canal impairment. Their results indicated that only audition was both necessary and sufficient to account for the phenomenon of object perception by the blind.

It is known that bats use a type of vocal radar to guide them in utter darkness, and thus it would seem that a similar mechanism is at work in humans; but if an object is closer than fifty feet the echo and original sound blend to such an extent that they cannot be heard separately by the human ear.

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This paper was presented as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts Degree at the University of Texas in 1952 by Bruce McCarty.

[1] Barnes, Lorraine, What Would a Blind Boy Want With a Bicycle? Austin *Sunday American Statesman*, Mar. 5, 1950.

[2] Supa, M., Cotzin, N.M., & Dallenbach, K.H., Facial Vision: The Perception of Obstacles by the Blind, *American Journal of Psychology*, 1944, 57, pp. 133-183.

[3] Worchel, P., & Dallenbach, K.M., Facial Vision: The Perception of Objects by the Deaf-Blind, *American Journal of Psychology*, 1947, 60, pp. 502-553.

Work by Cotzin and Dallenbach[4] however, indicated that rather than being the pure echo, it was a difference in tone between the original sound and the echo. This is known as the Doppler shift, and is the same as the often observed difference in the sound of a car as it approaches an observer rapidly and then recedes. As the car approaches the sound seems to rise and as it departs the sound seems to fall.

If this is the mechanism at work, it must mean that either the blind observer or the object is in motion in order to cause this frequency shift; but the blind Sergel[5] reported that he could not perceive an object if he approached it faster than a very slow walk.

If our blind boy, then, could not detect objects as well going faster, it would tend to bear out Sergel's statement; but if he could not detect them as well going slower, it would lend support to the Doppler theory of Cotzin and Dallenbach.

### The Subject

Burns Taylor was ideally suited for this experiment in that he had the ability to perceive objects quite well despite the fact that he was totally blind. In addition he already knew how to ride a bicycle very well, and therefore had a greater range of speeds at his command than most blind people.

He was born on January 16, 1940, in Houston, Texas, with normal eyesight, but on January 23, 1943, he was the victim of an accident which he describes as follows:

"I was lying across the bed and someone asked me if I wanted to play cowboys. I told him no, and then the gun went off. We had been playing with it on the bed. Ten of the shots hit me in this (right) eye and three in the other. It was a .22 loaded with rat shot—that scatter, you know; and is not like most of them with just a lead thing."

As a result of this accident, both eyeballs were removed, but he does not think of himself as handicapped, and he is not treated as if he were. He has a curiosity and a natural independence that makes him an accomplished lad for his age in spite of his loss.

One of his favorite pastimes is that of breaking rocks with a hammer. His aim is true and his stroke is positive and firm (few rocks can stand more than one blow.) He guides the hammer by kinesthesis toward the fingers of the opposite hand which holds the rock. His neighbors always reach a point of near panic at first; but his family takes a more philosophical view. They can't remember his ever hitting a finger, and though the hammer once bounced back and chipped a tooth they say he is far more accurate and careful than the average child.

Similarly with his climbing on trees, barns, fences and virtually anything available; and his cavorting and frisking as any boy would at the swimming pool.

At the age of 11 he goes to the neighborhood store unaccompanied, a block and a half away; and also to his friend's house which is two blocks in the other direction.

His parents really reverse the usual order of dependence, that is, they rely on his acute hearing and his good memory. They ask him names and addresses of friends and customers, and whether or not machinery is running in the adjoining building.

Twice he has saved his house from possible destruction by fire. During a

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[4] Cotzin, M., & Dallenbach, K.M., Facial Vision: the Role of Pitch and Loudness in the Perception of Obstacles by the Blind. *American Journal of Psychology*, 1950, 63, pp. 485-515.

[5] Burklen, Karl, *Blindenpsychologie*. Leipzig: Berth, 1924, p. 46.

remodeling period the pet cat jumped on the reclining form of Mr. Taylor causing him to throw his cigarette into the air. Following a diligent search by the other members of the family, Burns sniffed out the whereabouts of the lethal article in a pile of paper scraps!

Another time the family was preparing to depart when Burns smelled the scorching of a curtain which the wind had blown across a naked light bulb. It would likely have burst into flames soon after the family had left the house.

His favorite toys are sounds and things that make sounds. He gives voices to his toys and pets, and frequently delights in calling his friends on the telephone and disguising his voice to fool them. He saves tinfoil to hear it krinkle and listens to his heartbeats at night and pretends they are footsteps. His imitation of an ancient Ford starting on a frosty morning is very convincing, no doubt an outgrowth of his ability to distinguish cars as to their make and model merely by the sound of their engines.

Burns' mother says that he has a good imagination. When he was being prepared for a tonsillectomy at the age of 9 she told him a story about going to "ballon land" to allay his fears of the anaesthetic. Later he embellished it and retold it several times in a quasi-Disney romantic style, but now he associates this tale with his "youth" and is embarrassed when it is mentioned for he is now much older and more dignified.

### A Bicycle for a Blind Child?

Undoubtedly his most outstanding ability, and the one of most interest to this experiment is his ability to ride a bicycle. Burns first "saw" a bicycle that belonged to a friend, and after he had visited the bicycle shop of a department store vowed he must have one for his very own; but he hoped in vain during the Christmas season of 1949, and it looked as if he might never get one.

Then one day while she was hanging laundry out to dry, Mrs. Taylor beheld an apparition which left her unstrung for days. Burns was riding his brother's bicycle, but since it was much too large for him he had to perch precariously on one side of the vehicle and manipulate the opposite pedal by extending his leg through the frame. He had had no instructions whatever. Burns got a bicycle after that (his own size) even though his family called it a foolish investment.

Burns now rides very well, seldom hitting anything. To be sure, he makes use of all of his modalities while riding, for instance, he knows when he is approaching a curb because of the slant of the gutter, and he knows the difference in both the feel and the sound of grassy and gravel terrain from that of concrete. His memory comes in quite handily too, for once when he was approaching a mound of earth he turned neatly to avoid it—much to the consternation of his audience. He explained it thus: "Well, I guess I should know where it is; I dug it up two days ago."

### "The Cricket"

The most important function that accounts for his phenomenal ability is that of making a clicking sound with his mouth: it has earned him the nickname of "The Cricket." Similar to the radar system used by bats, Burns listens for a difference in the sound he is making. When he approaches an obstacle, or when it approaches him, he hears a rise in pitch of the echo (The Doppler shift). This difference in frequency together with its relative intensity tells him where the obstacle is and how fast the approach. He says it is easy.

No one knows just how he first discovered this technique, but it was al-

ready well developed before his parents were aware of the significance of the sounds he made. The only explanation they can offer is that in 1946 (Burns was 6) the family heard a radio program which dealt with rehabilitation of blinded service men. Though Burns was playing by the radio, he seemed completely uninterested in the program. Perhaps this bears out the saying that a boy is "a set of ears with a great deal of imagination between."

Quite some time after this program Burns entered a strange house, clicked once or twice and announced that it was a large room. Everyone was speechless for they knew he had never been in the house before.

Now he uses this sound for finding smaller articles and for guiding himself between articles of furniture; and also for jobs such as locating buildings and trees.

## The Experiment

The site selected for this experiment was a wide concrete walk running through a large unobstructed yard in front of the Texas State School for the Blind in Austin. It was large enough to accommodate bicycle riding and had few surrounding objects which could render distracting echos.

Two portable obstacles made of quarter-inch masonite were selected for use because they had been used successfully in previous experiments with the blind[6] and evidently they cast an adequate echo. These targets covered slightly more than half of the walk and were placed along the course in a planned haphazard order to test Burns' ability to locate them as he approached on his bicycle.

[6] Worchel, P., Mauney, J., & Andrews, J. G., Perception of Obstacles by the Blind, *Journal Exceptional Psychology*, 1950, 40, pp. 746-751.

Obviously no speedometer arrangement for timing the trials was practical; so it was decided that an average time over the entire course was the best arrangement. The subject was instructed to try to keep the speed as nearly constant as possible, and he co-operated as well as his youthful enthusiasm permitted.

The length of each session was governed by the fatiguability of the young subject and when he indicated that he was about to succumb to the summer afternoons, there was an adjournment to a neighborhood swimming pool.

## The Results

There were two obstacles during each of one hundred runs; so there was a possibility of two hundred collisions. Burns collided only four times, and of these the first two took place on the first day of the experiment; the third was on day number four (which showed other interesting variations.)

After 40 consecutive trials without a collision, the subject was instructed to go as fast as possible. Forty more trials were given to make the total number one hundred. Only one collision was made after the instructions to speed had been given.

The results showed that the mean time for runs in which collisions occurred was 46.75 seconds, while the time for the non-collision runs was 30.63 seconds. This would seem to be conclusive except that due to our method of timing the collision itself would increase the time for that particular run.

In order to minimize this effect, the data have been fractionated into groups of 10 trials and the results of each group averaged. This has the effect of smoothing out the exaggerations in time due to the collisions themselves, thus:

| Group of 10 Trials | Average Time in Seconds | Number of Collisions |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 44.3 | 2 |
| 2 | 40.3 | 1 |
| 3 | 39.3 | – |
| 4 | 38.7 | – |
| 5 | 39.8 | – |
| 6 | 39.1 | – |
| 7 | 33.2 | 1 |
| 8 | 26.8 | – |
| 9 | 22.7 | – |
| 10 | 25.6 | – |

It can be seen that the faster speeds did not tend to increase the number of collisions.

The first two collisions are attributed more to the novelty of the situation than to the factor of speed since they are the longest times recorded.

The third contact is bracketed by unusual circumstances. Even though this course had been selected because of its freedom from extraneous echo-producing objects, Burns could soon tell the starting positions by echoes from a stone wall at one end of the course and a building over 30 feet beyond the other end. It was on the fourth day that the third collision occurred, and several factors suggested that since this was the day the course was first run from north to south this re-arrangement of echo patterns might have distracted him.

In view of this and the comparatively slow speed, it is hardly likely that this collision can be attributable merely to increased speed.

When questioned about the final collision Burns said he could hear it coming but was going too fast to turn aside; so he hit it.

It is hard to find this set of results compatible with the statement of Sergel that an increased speed was accompanied by a decreased perception of objects. Cotzin and Dallenbach estimate their experimental subjects moved at rates of between two and four feet per second. Only the four slowest trials in this experiment were slower than the rate of four feet per second. The remaining trials ranged upward to 22.4 feet per second.

### Future Implications

Obviously, our experimental design was not flexible enough to accomodate the boy's phenomenal ability, and it must remain for another experiment to test adequately both extremes in speed with provisions to insure that human reflex limits are not mistaken for limits of a perception.

A more intensive investigation of this question should include some method of obtaining the speed at the time of impact rather than an average speed over the entire course. This would obviate undue influence on the time element when a collision occurred.

The Haskins Laboratories have undertaken experiments to develop guidance devices for the blind. In their progress report[7] they have outlined a two-fold problem: the development of devices which would give to the blind (a) a mental picture of the environment, and (b) the location of obstacles close at hand.

They have undertaken these two assignments separately, and so far have used supersonics, light beams, other electromagnetic radiation and audio frequencies as means of investigating the environment.

The two chief difficulties which must be overcome are, first, the inherent technical difficulty involved in developing an adequate mechanism; and, second,

[7] *Research on Guidance Devices for the Blind:* A progress report on the work done at Haskins Laboratory. Committee on Sensory Devices, National Academy of Science, 1946, pp. 1-196.

the limits of the scope of operations. In the case of the panoramic devices, the cues presented by the devices are too complex for practicality while in the case of the probe device the signal represents only a smattering of the environment. It is similar to what a sighted man would see if he "viewed his environment though a soda straw."

Work in the audio range was dismissed because devices employing a high pitched, continuous tone would be annoying and distracting to people other than the user, and hearing-aid devices are found wanting in their directionality.

The system of object location developed by Burns uses different dimensions of the same signal to ascertain different kinds of information about his environment, and it has several advantages over the proposed mechanical contrivances. It uses no devices which were not bestowed by a bountiful nature, with obvious economic and mechanical advantages.

The quasi-directionality of the high-pitched audio clicks and the intermittent nature of the sound makes it adaptable to both the probe and the panoramic applications. For gross estimation of his surroundings the boy uses the loud, widely spaced clicks in much the same manner as radar employs pulses of radio frequencies. The long intervals between clicks enables him to judge from the echoes where such things as buildings are when they are more than fifty feet away.

Burns probes the area in front of him for troublesome small objects with softer, more rapid clicks. Doubtless in this case it is the Doppler effect rather than the echo *per se* which enables him to locate these articles. The non-directional quality of his "transmitter" gives him command of the wide angle necessary for panoramic cues, and the narrower angle used in probing depends on the selectivity of his attention, but never reaches the soda-straw variety. He gets vital information concerning over-hanging obstructions and those slightly to the right and left.

Since he intentionally generates the sound which he uses, it is always appropriate to the task at hand. It is a complex tone, rich in harmonics, and therefore neither shrill nor continuous: hence non-irritating to the neighbors.

Whether Burns' system can be learned by others is a moot question. The work of Worchel, Mauney and Andrews[6] indicates that approximately 79 per cent of the blind have some degree of object perception ability. The study did not purport to determine how many of the remainder could develop this ability with sufficient training. (Ed. note: A later study by Worchel and Mauney showed that *all* of the subjects could be trained.)

### Importance of Hearing

It might be helpful to obtain audiograms on a sample such as they used. If it were found that those who had little or no ability in this realm were also deficient in hearing—especially in the higher, more directional frequencies—it might be concluded that their ability did not develop because of their auditory impairment.

A corollary of this would seem to be that anyone with sufficient auditory acuity might be trained to perceive his environment by sound, at least to the point reached by Burns, and perhaps to a greater degree.

If, on the other hand, there was found no correlation between hearing acuity and object perception, it might safely be assumed that another factor besides high frequency hearing was operative, and this would have to be isolated and studied before it could be stated with

any degree of confidence the approximate proportion of the population that could learn to function as Burns does.

**Summary**

The present study was undertaken to investigate the relationship between rate of motion of a blind observer and his ability to perceive obstacles.

The subject was a totally blind boy of 11 years who was instructed to ride his bicycle over a course in which two movable obstacles had been placed. After 40 trials without a collision, the subject was instructed to ride as swiftly as he could. Forty additional trials were given.

The results showed only four collisions, and one of those was during the higher speed trials. Thus, the results indicate that for this boy, higher speeds do not impair object perception.

# World Council Moves Toward Uniformity

DELEGATES TO THE General Assembly of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind reached the first international agreement on requirements of a minimum definition of blindness and adopted far-reaching resolutions and constitutional amendments before adjourning their Paris meeting in mid-August.

The Assembly, first in five years, proposed three criteria for defining blindness: total absence of sight, visual acuity not exceeding 3/60 or 10/200 in the better eye with correction, or serious visual limitation, generally up to 20 degrees.

While stressing the 3/60 requirement as the foundation for world-wide definition, the Council "strongly" urged that the definition be expanded wherever possible to include visually handicapped persons with 20/200 (6/60) sight in the better eye, after correction.

The resolution urging the minimum definition of blindness was unanimously adopted by representatives of more than thirty nations, and is essentially the same as that passed recently by the First Pan-American Conference on the Welfare of the Blind and the Prevention of Blindness in Sao Paulo, Brazil. It will be forwarded to the United Nations Technical Working Group for the Physically Handicapped for possible UN endorsement and subsequent recommendation to United Nations member governments.

The minimum definition measure was one of fourteen resolutions adopted by the Assembly which, before it closed its week-long meeting, named these officers: President, E. A. Baker, Canada; Vice Presidents, R. M. Alpaiwala, India; Paolo Bentivoglio, Italy; Gerard Borre, Belgium; Alejandro Meza, Mexico; Carl Strehl, Germany; Treasurer, Henri Amblard, France; Secretary General, Eric T. Boulter. The election was carried out under provisions of a new constitutional amendment, which is discussed later in this article.

As a result of discussions stimulated

U.S. delegates and observers at the meeting of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind. Left to right at table: Eric T. Boulter; George Card; Joseph Clunk; Robert H. Thompson; M. Robert Barnett; Alfred Allen; Edward J. Waterhouse; H. A. Wood.

by the program content, the Assembly brought forward a number of resolutions designed to reflect the group's opinion on many subjects. All resolutions passed unanimously with the exception of those dealing with handicap allowances and the definition of blindness, in which there was an indication of different opinions among the delegates. In its resolutions, the World Assembly:

—Cautioned against loss of "incentive to work and to contribute . . . to the economic and social life of the community," but proposed that blind persons be granted an amount free of a means test "in recognition of the extra and unavoidable expense of living on account of blindness." The Assembly endorsed similar provisions made by Sweden, Denmark and Australia which make such allowances over and above other types of general maintenance assistance as may be required and recommended similar legislation by other governments. The resolution is directed at assuring blind persons "a reasonable level of subsistence in accordance with the standards of living in the community." The recommended action could be embodied in general social security programs or those expressly operated for the blind, the Council noted.

—Proposed that fundamental training and readjustment of the blind be geared to the blind person's family, community and employment background, and urged the introduction of adaptive training for "simple, practical agricultural pursuits in familiar surroundings." Attention was drawn to the Pilot or Shamba Training Scheme, now being carried on in Africa by the Uganda Foundation for the Blind in co-operation with the British Empire So-

ciety for the Blind. The Council felt that rural training centers for this specific purpose would be preferable to concentration of the blind in sheltered workshops in large cities and towns. It also resolved that in rural areas, where road access is possible, Red Cross and other workers be organized to do home visiting to instruct parents in the care of young blind children.

### Urge United Nations Support to World Blind

—Noted that "the best intentions of the underdeveloped countries of the world" cannot effect the emancipation of blind people without "expert technical guidance and financial resources" and urged that the United Nations and specialized agencies extend this support to blind welfare activities in these regions. Individual governments, however, were urged to launch campaigns of public education concerning the needs of the blind. Representatives of the United Nations Division of Social Welfare, International Labor Organization and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization participated in the World Assembly.

—Resolved to cope with what was termed a growing international problem by investigating the extent of blindness among lepers to determine how organizations for the blind can best assist in the rehabilitation of blind persons cured of leprosy.

—Recognized that "the totally blind are in many cases more seriously handicapped than those . . . who retain some residual vision" and urged that the totally blind "whenever possible shall be accorded such preferential services and assistance as may be required to assure them equal opportunity with all other categories of blind persons."

—Voted, in keeping with its belief in free international exchange of information on blindness, to compile a catalog of films, posters and pamphlets designed to arouse interest in the prevention of blindness and the welfare of the blind. In cooperation with other international agencies, the Council will seek also to stimulate the production and distribution of publicity material on a worldwide basis.

### Governmental Research Projects Proposed

—Recommended that international bodies and individual governments give full financial support to recognized effort in the fields of science and technology, since progress in these fields has added greatly to the physical, social and economic independence of the blind.

—Voted to address "an official and formal request" to the International Air Transport Association proposing a general fare concession which would allow a blind person and an escort to purchase "two tickets for the price of one at the ruling rate for the class of travel being used." Individual governments, airlines and other interested groups are urged to secure similar provisions within their respective countries.

—Recommend that an international body be constituted to compile an international deaf-blind manual alphabet, among Western countries in the first instance. Three deaf-blind persons and a sighted consultant would serve on the committee.

—Adopted other resolutions dealing with activities in the braille field. While recording its "profound gratitude to UNESCO" for that body's "magnificent contribution" to the field of orthographic and other braille usage, the Council noted that UNESCO'S budget makes no funds available for the solution of braille problems after December, 1955. UNESCO member governments were urged to allocate additional funds,

while the Assembly agreed to "accept parent responsibility for the World Braille Council" and to finance continued work toward international acceptance of uniform practice in all areas of braille usage. The Council engaged Harry Victor Spanner, United Kingdom, to produce, in a period not to exceed one year, a revised Braille Music Manual. It further resolved that present efforts to secure uniformity in braille music notation be "reasonably completed" before corresponding efforts are initiated in the field of mathematical and scientific notations. (See report on Braille Music Conference, pp. 326-327.)

#### Constitutional Amendments

Opportunity for full regional representation was insured through the Council's adoption of several constitutional amendments. The first changed the composition of the Council's Executive Committee to require five members from North America, seven from Europe, two from the Middle East, four from the Far East, two from South America, one from Oceania, three members at large, chairmen of consultative committees and the secretary-general, who now holds a non-territorial status. A second amendment, also aimed at greater representation, increases the number of vice presidents from two to five.

Named to the Executive Committee under provisions of the new amendment in addition to the officers listed previously were: Sir Clutha Mackenzie, Braille Committee; E. H. Getliff, Education Committee; J. C. Colligan, United Kingdom; Hans Seierup, Denmark; Stevan Uzelac, Yugoslavia; Alfred Allen, M. Robert Barnett, George Card, United States; Juan Antonio Pardo Ospina, Colombia; Jose Espinola Veiga, Brazil; Mohammed Nour, Egypt; Amal Shah, India; Kingsley Dassanaike, Ceylon; Takeo Iwahashi, Japan; Charles W. Bennett, Australia; and Mitat Enc, Turkey. F. G. Tingen, Netherlands, and Louis Van Schalkwijk, Union of South Africa, were named members at large. The Council voted to require the Executive Committee to meet at least once every two years. It formerly met once a year.

To secure wider representation of divergent views, the Council voted to change its method of apportionment for national delegations. Under the new provision, countries of less than 20 million population now are permitted two representatives; 20 to 40 million population, four representatives; more than 40 million population, six representatives.

The change in representation is expected to increase the Council's membership, and is coupled with an increase of from $50 to $100 for annual membership fee. The Council adopted a budget calling for expenditure of $14,000 annually until 1959, when it must meet again.

The Executive Council of the International Conference of Educators of Blind Youth met during the Assembly, and voted to hold the next international conference on education in a Northern European country in the summer of 1957.

A meeting of the International Conference on Braille Music. At table facing camera, center background from left to right: Pierre Navaux, representing UNESCO, Division of Mass Communication; Sir Clutha Mackenzie, Chairman of the Conference; L. W. Rodenberg, Braille Music Consultant for UNESCO and pre-Conference Co-Ordinator; Georges S. Raverat, Chairman of the 1929 International Braille Music Conference.

# International Conference on Braille Music

HARRY J. DITZLER

IN ITS SEPTEMBER issue the *New Outlook for the Blind* made necessarily brief mention of the International Conference on Braille Music, July 22 to 30th in Paris, sponsored by UNESCO. Twenty-four delegates from nineteen nations gathered at UNESCO House to seek greater uniformity for braille music; inasmuch as the goal envisaged braille-using musicians everywhere, it is the more regrettable that countries restrained by the Iron Curtain, though urgently invited, did not participate.

Regional surveys and meetings during the previous year enabled delegates to voice the conviction of their respective constituents. However, under the genial chairmanship of Sir Clutha Mackenzie, President of the World Braille Council, there was gradually manifest a general willingness to yield local preferences to the common good. Thus, concurrent sub-committee meetings in addition to plenary sessions, achieved gratifying results, whose technical implications would interest only those directly concerned, and are therefore enumerated elsewhere. Suffice it here to note that complete agreement was attained on literally scores of points ranging from minor discrepancies to erstwhile controversies of major proportions.

Indicative of the progress that exceeded the most optimistic pre-Conference hopes is the present close conformity of notation between Oriental music and that of the West—refuting, in this realm, at least, Kipling's notion that "Never the twain shall meet." Likewise momentous are the tentative plans for

the international cataloguing and distribution of braille music. Because no single conference can deal adequately with all the manifold aspects of so challenging an assignment, continuing machinery was set up, whereby a permanent music consultant, under the auspices of the World Braille Council, may carry forward the work.

The immediate success of the Conference and its propitious aftermath stem in considerable part from the selfless effort of one man. It was well-nigh inevitable that his forty years of pre-eminent experience and objective research should designate L. W. Rodenberg leader of this enterprising venture. In the unprecedented role of World Braille Council Music Consultant to UNESCO, throughout the preceding eighteen months Mr. Rodenberg gleaned and documented pertinent data from worldwide sources! Moreover, his meticulous preparing of the agenda, and impartial shepherding on the scene of concerted deliberation, proved obviously indispensable.

Lest this report suggest unalloyed labor, one hastens gratefully to add that, prelude to the quite intensive business, was the utterly delightful informal reception tendered conferees by the gracious personnel of the American Foundation for Overseas Blind, and the concluding festive occasion under the cordial ministrations of the UNESCO staff. Besides, when in mid-conference, debate was waxing ardent and, perchance, arduous, the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind staged a lavish banquet which could not but mellow the heartiest of warriors. Memorable indeed was the Sunday afternoon tour of Paris, with its privilege of paying thankful homage at the tomb of Louis Braille.

Little wonder that a final resolution expressed sincere appreciation of unique hospitality, and manifest collaboration among UNESCO, the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, and the American Foundation for Overseas Blind in making possible this Music Conference of truly historic significance.

# Newell Perry —

## *Teacher and Humanitarian*

JACOBUS TENBROEK

DECEMBER 19, 1953, MARKED the occasion of the 80th birthday of Dr. Newell Perry. It also marked the occasion of his retirement as president of the California Council for the Blind. These are not merely private events in the life of a private person. They were public events in the life of a public figure.

Dr. Perry's beliefs and attitudes reflect the basic principles and outlook of the organized blind movement. In honoring him, therefore, we honor ourselves. In honoring ourselves, we honor him. A review of his life and activities provides a conduit through which to channel an exposition of the fundamental tenets of blind people everywhere, but particularly of those blind people who engaged in an organized effort to improve the lot of the blind.

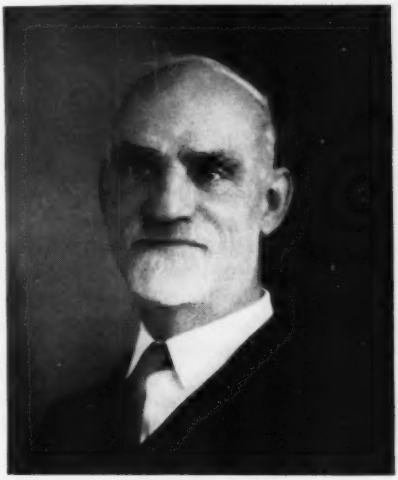
Sixty years ago in California there took place a flagrant violation of popular belief and publicly prescribed custom. The lawless act was this: a bicycle trip around the San Francisco Bay from Berkeley by way of San Jose to San Francisco. The culprit was a blind youth named Newell Perry.

As surely as there are laws of man and nature there seemed then to be "laws of blindness." Young Newell Perry's performance in riding a bicycle for 80 miles was only his first transgression of the accepted conventions and convictions of his time. From that deed of law breaking he went on to embody in his career a systematic challenge of the entire book of rules governing the conduct of the blind: the age-old proscriptions against independence of action, against seeking a higher education, against entering a profession, against striving for self-support, and finally against the anciently honorable and indeed biblical notion that the blind should not lead the blind. In fact there has been no "law" of blindness which Newell Perry has not defied and broken. Moreover, he compounded his offense by inciting others, particularly the youthful blind, to do likewise. The cumulative effect of this career of law breaking has contributed immeasurably to the fact that over the last half-century the old books of laws have been repealed and thrown away.

Newell Perry lost his sight at the age of eight. But that was not all! Before two more years had passed he was fatherless, homeless, penniless—and blind. With 21 cents in his pocket, a barefooted country boy (but without the bright eyes or even the dog which usually accompany the legend) he hitchhiked alone all the way from Shasta County to the California School for the Blind in Berkeley.

Over the next nine years he completed a primary and secondary education at the School for the Blind and at Berkeley High School. This in itself was more education than most people

acquired in those 19th century days; for the blind it was almost unheard of. But for Newell Perry it was only the barest beginning. He went on to graduate with honors from the University of California in the class of '96. He then became successively a teaching fellow, assistant, and finally instructor in mathematics at the state university. Still this was not enough for young Mr. Perry. Breaking another rule and yet another, he made his way alone to Europe in 1900, carried on graduate work at Zurich University in Switzerland and Munich University in Germany, receiving his Ph.D. in mathematics from the latter in 1901.



Newell Perry

## Social History

The rest is well known history—social history. For 35 years, from 1912 to 1947, Dr. Perry was a teacher and director of advanced studies at the California School for the Blind. For 19 years, from its founding in 1934, he was the president of the California Council for the Blind. For 50 years and more he has been the guide and counselor of hosts of young blind people in search of full fledged citizenship and opportunity.

In his lifelong occupation as teacher, it is natural that part of Dr. Perry's enduring contribution to the welfare of the blind should fall in the field of education. He was largely responsible for development of the system of higher education to the point where today it is routine for the blind youth of California to matriculate at universities and enter recognized professions. A fair share of the blind students who have received degrees and honors at California colleges and universities not only participated in the system which was so much the product of his labor but drew from Dr. Perry personally their original inspiration and above all the confidence that these accomplishments were within their power.

But great as Dr. Perry's educational achievements have been, they are outstripped by his accomplisments in the broad field of social improvement. He was a prime mover in securing legal and constitutional provisions in California: protected the right of blind persons to enter a number of professions; forbade irrational discrimination against the blind in the state civil service and in secondary teaching; enabled blind college students to pursue their studies with the aid of sighted readers hired by the state; and provided a system of public assistance to the blind which is not only the best in the nation but the model and precedent for the rest of the states. The steps which led to the establishment of this system included a constitutional amendment in 1928, the adoption of a comprehensive statute in 1929, and successive amendments in each of the sessions of the state legislature from 1931 through 1953.

It is the story of these battles led by Newell Perry—in their conduct as well as their outcome, in their strategy as well as their policy—that the quality of his statesmanship most clearly emerges. For had the constitutional and legislative structure erected in California over these years of unremitting labor been no more than a modern version of the Elizabethan poor laws, the blind would have been materially aided. But this was neither the character of the man nor of the measures. Instead the whole complex problem of public assistance to the blind has been re-assessed. A system was created which relieved the distress of poverty, and did it better than before. But in addition three cardinal principles were added which raised the entire machinery out of the dust of the past and pointed it forward.

The new system took cognizance of the need of the blind for adjustments on the social and psychological, as well as on the physical level. It permitted and encouraged the sightless to rehabilitate themselves and to become self-supporting. It applied the democratic principle of individual dignity to an under-privileged class of American citizens by guaranteeing them a fair measure of independence and self-respect in the conduct of their lives.

These legal and material achievements have rested upon a firm foundation of self-organization by the blind. More than any other person, Dr. Perry implanted and nurtured among the blind of California the sense of common cause, the spirit of collaborative effort in seeking solutions to the problems of blindness. More than any other, it was he who taught them that their over-riding problems were not individual and could not separately be solved; that single-handed they could not oppose and hope to convert the power of government; nor the tyranny of public prejudice and unthinking discrimination which rejects while it over-protects. The blind have come to realize the value of organization and collective action, have seen the need to build for themselves the machinery that will unify their efforts and galvanize their energies.

Underlying these activities and accomplishments has been a philosophy of the blind and their role in society which is humane, enlightened, optimistic and deeply rooted in the most traditional principles of American democracy. In the control of their own lives, in the responsibility of their own programs, in the organized and consistent pursuit of objectives of their own choosing—in these alone lies the hope of the blind for economic independence, social integration and emotional security.

These then are the works and this the philosophy which underlay them. A word might be said about the personality of the man who sponsored the one and expounded the other. What impels a man to a lifetime of selfless devotion to others? What prompts one to forget his personal advancement and spend his time and energy in the advancement of his fellows? What is the nature of self sacrifice? Whence does the social conscience take its rise? These questions, for the most part, are unanswerable. The answers lie hidden deeply in the recesses of mind and personality not yet probed by the psychologist. In the case of Dr. Perry, however, some things are clear. He has never been a zealot. Reform with him has not been an emotional effusion, an accompaniment of unbalance and fanaticism. It was rather the product of a critical evaluation and penetrating analysis of facts of his own experience with blindness and of an active and restless disposition. He is a

man of singular determination and dogged persistence; and these traits are combined with emotional stability, temperamental equilibrum, intellectual composure, an incisive wit and remarkable sanity.

### Always a Teacher

In all of this activity on behalf of the blind, however numerous and varied the tasks, it may be seen that Dr. Perry's role has been consistently the same: that of teacher. Who then have been his pupils and what have been his teachings? His pupils include those who were in his classes under the campanile at the turn of the century. To them he taught mathematics. They cover several generations of youthful blind who enrolled at the state school in Berkeley. He also taught them mathematics; but much in addition. He taught them a new attitude toward their blindness, toward their problems as blind people and toward the world. He infused them with hope. He stirred them with ambition. He gave them original and enduring confidence in their ability to live useful, normal and economically self-supporting lives. His pupils include the adult blind population for whom he has been pathfinder, pioneer and sage.

His pupils include as well those who work with the blind whether in education, rehabilitation, legislation, or social welfare, who have learned from him what the real needs of the blind are—the need of normal people with only a physical handicap—and still more important, what the real abilities of the blind are—the abilities of normal people seeking only self-respect and self-sufficiency. Most of all, the pupils of Newell Perry are the sighted public of America; for in his lifetime, and immeasurably through his work, they have come ever more clearly to see the blind as neighbors, not as outcasts, as equal partners, not as dependent wards, as normal human beings, not as mental incompetents—in short, as ordinary men and women like themselves.

Eighty years ago the almost invariable fate of the blind man was mental and spiritual disintegration. Today, his prospect—though still in large measure an unrealized potentiality—is complete social and economic integration. Eighty years ago, the helpless blind man begged only a shelter by the side of the road. Today in the confidence of his normality, he demands a place in the sun. Dr. Perry did not bring about this great change. That was the product of many forces and many men. But he did nurture and augment—and we cannot say more or less in summation of the life and work of Newell Perry than that the data of his biography are monuments in the history of this social revolution.

# First Workshop on Education of Blind Negro Children

REPRESENTATIVES FROM five southern states gathered at the Louisiana State School for Blind Negroes for the purpose of participating in a workshop dealing with problems which they are attempting to meet in their own school situations. The date for the conference was August 31-September 3, 1954. Mrs. I. M. Theus, principal of the school, and Dr. F. G. Clark, superintendent of the school and president of Southern University, acted as hosts and leaders in the pre-planning for the conference.

Teachers, houseparents, and school administrators were there from Florida, Mississippi, Kentucky, Arkansas and Louisiana. The topics which formed the basis of the program were previously submitted by the committee of faculty members from the Louisiana School. The pre-registration requested from participants from other schools served as a checklist indicating the popularity of the choices which made up the final schedule of four work groups.

The theme for the conference as stated on the program was "Seeking Solutions to Educational Problems of the Blind Child." The people who attended the meeting were primarily concerned with the examination of curricula and procedures in those schools in the South where blind Negro children are receiving their educational program.

This was the first conference of its kind, and resulted from a request sent from the Louisiana School for the Blind to the American Foundation for the Blind. The agreement was that the Foundation would financially make it possible for certain staff members requested to help in workshop to come to Baton Rouge, and also pay the cost of room and board for those out-of-state participants who were in attendance at the meeting. The Foundation was also asked to have one of its staff members to help in the planning of the workshop.

One of the outstanding features of the meeting was the fact that President Clark of Southern University made available to the workshop the service of a number of professors who could represent the background in general education. These professors contributed valuable consultative help to the various groups as they represented the different areas which had been previously selected. They acted as consultants, lecturers, and participants in many helpful ways. In addition to the professors in psychology, vocational counseling, physical education, music and the various academic areas, the participants felt fortunate in having in attendance both the Dean of Men, and the Dean of Women. These two people made valuable contributions to the houseparents section.

The professors from Southern University were: Mr. J. B. Cade; Dr. E. C. Harrison; Mr. M. L. Harvey; Mr. U. S. Jones, Mr. B. A. Little; Mrs. O. B. Moore; and Mr. T. H. Shields.

The staff particularly responsible for applications in the education of blind children were as follows: Mrs. Florence Henderson, Associate Professor of Education, San Francisco State College, who worked especially with the elementary and music groups; Mr. Lee Iverson,

General Education Staff of Southern University who assisted at the Workshop on the Education of Negro Children, Louisiana State School for Blind Negroes, 1954

Principal, Florida School for the Deaf and Blind, who worked in the areas of physical education and industrial education; Miss Isabel B. Baughn, Research Analyst, American Foundation for the Blind, who worked with the houseparents group and represented the Urban League by presenting some of their career conference materials and other resources of importance to those who are attempting to meet the needs of young Negro children; Miss Georgie Lee Abel, Consultant in Education, American Foundation for the Blind, who worked with the junior-senior high school group, and spent some time observing and evaluating the progress of all of the groups in an effort to continue the joint planning and participation with Mrs. Theus, the resident co-ordinator.

The pre-planning at the Louisiana School was delegated to a great extent by Mrs. Theus to a committee of faculty members who had worked on the details of the meeting for more than a year. The administration of the conference was a success largely due to the efforts of these teachers who understood the function of a good conference because they had done such excellent work in order to secure a worthwhile professional experience for those who attended. The planning committee was composed of nine faculty members from the Louisiana State School for Blind Negroes and seven representatives from Southern University. This was aided by the counsel of Mrs. Theus and Dr. Clark who also appeared on the program.

In addition to the special education staff made available through the American Foundation, there were also contributions to the program by the following state personnel from Louisiana: Dr. W. F. Beyer, Supervisor of Exceptional Children, State Board of Education, Baton Rouge; Mr. H. B. Aycock, Director, Rehabilitation Division for the

Special Education Staff provided by American Foundation for the Blind for the Workshop held at the Louisiana State School for Blind Negroes, 1954

Blind and Sight Conservation, Baton Rouge; and Miss Margaret Sutherlin, Caseworker for the Blind, Baton Rouge.

Perhaps the most important points of the conference, as expressed by the participants, was the manner in which the contributions from general education were combined with the needs of people representing the area of special education. The participants recognized the value of the philosophy of all of them since it was focused at all times on the interest of blind children and the manner in which their schools are attempting to meet their needs. The feeling was expressed over and over again that this type of conference was of sufficient inspiration to those who would be returning to their various schools that they hoped that such an opportunity could be made available at designated intervals in different schools for the blind.

# Fisher Named Foreign News Editor

## *Foreign Correspondents Also Named*

WILLIAM FISHER, JR., who directs publicity for the American Foundation for Overseas Blind, has been appointed as Foreign News Editor on the staff of the *New Outlook for the Blind*. Mr. Fisher is a graduate in journalism from Stetson University, Deland, Florida. Prior to joining the AFOB staff he was Bureau Chief, Daytona Beach News and correspondent for Associated Press.

Mr. Fisher's appointment will provide the *New Outlook* with a more complete coverage of news of interest to workers for the blind from other countries throughout the world.

In addition, eight foreign correspondents have already been named; they will furnish the *New Outlook* with "spot" news stories concerning activities for the blind from their respective nations. Longer, professional-type articles will also be forwarded from time to time.

The countries thus far represented are Mexico, United Kingdom, British Colonial Territories, Turkey, Germany, Ireland, Union of South Africa and Sweden. When plans are fulfilled a corps of more than twenty-five foreign correspondents will keep the *New Outlook* readers informed concerning developments in all parts of the world.

These persons have been named as correspondents as a result of initial response to the expansion program:

John F. Wilson, Director of the British Empire Society for the Blind, London, for British Colonial Territories.

Vernon Barlow, General Editor, Royal National Institute for the Blind, London, for United Kingdom. Mr. Barlow is the Editor of the New Beacon.

Prof. Dr. Carl Strehl, Director of Verein der Blinden Geistesarbeiten, Marburg/Lahn, for Germany. Dr. Strehl is a vice president of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind.

D. J. van Wyk, Organizing Secretary, The South African National Council for the Blind, Pretoria, for the Union of South Africa.

Charles Hedkvist, De Blindas Forening, Stockholm, for Sweden.

Miss B. E. Knox, Organizing Secretary, National Council for the Blind of Ireland, Dublin, for Ireland.

Alejandro Meza, Mexico City, for the Republic of Mexico. Prof. Meza, a braille music expert, is a vice president of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind.

Mitat Enc, Ankara, for Turkey. He is a member of the World Council Executive Committee.

# Dr. Bloodhead Reports —
## On a Rough Draft of History

HISTORIANS HAVE SUCH an unfortunate weakness for source material that any history of work for the blind will be found to be absurdly factual in context. In fact, the writers of history are so unable to use their imaginations that they have failed to describe a single historical event which did not take place.

The present writer, who styles himself a creative historian of the non-factual school, intends to sail well beyond the horizons established by source material into the vast and unknown waters of pre-history. Once there, the historians of blindness will agree, we shall really be in deep water.

Let us sail far enough into the past to study a blind man who has been ignored by the historians simply because he did not exist.

We find ourselves in the dankness of a dim cave where squatting figures are just perceptible among the eerie shadows. In our mind's eye we may make out a hairy man happily crunching bones with a good appetite and, if our minds have a nose, we will catch the odor of wet fur and halitosis. Suddenly we hear a cry of anguish. The squatting figures shift uneasily. A minority group has just been created. The hairy man has blinded himself while eating raw porcupine.

For days the wretched creature crouches in his corner, gutterally whimpering. The other members of the cave culture pay him not the slightest heed for their code of survival provides that every man must hunt and kill for himself.

And then one day desperation lends strength to his shrunken limbs. Clutching a convenient artifact, he secures a supply of food by hammering his neighbor on the head. An age of true independence for the blind ensues.

But slowly, the slumbering seeds of civilization begin to bloom behind the beetling brows of the squatting figures. They are transformed from isolated individuals to members of a group. The skeletal framework of a primitive society has come into being, complete with the first social problem—the common fear of being hammered.

This problem gives rise to the first rude seminar. With vile sounding grunts, the appropriate punishment for the blind man is proposed, discussed and approved. A welfare program is born.

We now see the blind man, or Case One as he is now called, deprived of his hammer and subsisting on rotten leftovers, or donations, as they are now called.

Gradually the quality of these donations improves as a new intangible called sympathy stirs within the furry breasts of the squatting figures. This feeling increases whenever they think of the blind man regaining possession of his hammer. We may refer to this period as "The Age of Voluntary Contributions."

Of course, we are too wise in the ways of work for the blind to believe that this solution was satisfactory. We know the prolific nature of social problems. Placed in the same cage with their solutions, they breed amazingly.

But then, where would we be without these blessed little events?

As the donations become juicier, an idea develops in the sloping brain of one brutish fellow. This is not a pre-historic or Neanderthal idea but the first of the progressive ideas, or in other words, schemes for exploitation. The blind man is obviously in need of an organization. A recreation program must be initiated. Surely the other cave dwellers can be persuaded to shell out a little more raw mastodon to feed the organization.

The program continues to expand as long as new forms of recreation can be thought up and soon a sizeable number of the cave personnel are on it and receiving their daily hand-out. This is known as "The Golden Age of Gimmie."

Next appears another contemporary of that age who observed that the blind man has been driven half out of his mind by recreation, and who initiates a program of social work. With a group of trained cave teachers, she is soon hard at work adjusting the blind man. The Golden Age is in its heyday with new organizations forming daily.

Now, however, we begin to perceive the decline and fall of the Golden Age. Someone has thought of rehabilitation. At the first annual convention, a soft grunting philosopher points out that the blind man need not be such a drag on society. He may be trained until he becomes productive. He may again experience the sheer ecstacy of working hard all the time and society will no longer find it necessary to care for the people who care for him.

There is considerable opposition to this revolutionary proposal from the figures squatting on the right but it is eventually adopted and soon "The Age of Crude Brooms" is in full swing. The blind man fashions these necessary items and the brutish fellow and the hairy woman and half the people in the cave have to go back to work.

We have now seen work for the blind swing through a cycle which is not entirely unfamiliar to us, and as we leave the cave to return to the far distant and better organized future, we see an interesting bit of by-play. The brutish fellow is slyly offering a generous portion of raw porcupine to the soft grunting philosopher.

# 1954 National Federation Convention

MORE THAN 350 delegates and their families met in Louisville, Kentucky, from July 17 to 20 for the fourteenth annual convention of the National Federation of the Blind. Twenty-eight state affiliates were represented by official delegates. This record attendance symbolizes the enthusiasm and high degree of participation on the part of those present during the four-day program which proved among the most productive and successful in Federation history.

The program encompassed more than a score of speeches, reports and panel discussions touching on every subject of importance to the Federation and to the blind of America. The topics ranged from education to employment, from vending stands to vocational training, from workshops to welfare, and from lenses to legislation. Specialists from a wide variety of professional fields were present to inform the group on recent developments and participate in the discussion.

Among the highlights of the convention were addresses by three distinguished blind guests: Major General Melvin J. Maas, United State Marine Corps, Retired, a former congressman from Minnesota who is presently chairman of the President's Committee on Employment of the Physically Handicapped; Judge T. Munford Boyd, Professor of Law at the University of Virginia and formerly chairman of the War Production Authority Appeals Board; and Dr. David Guyton, Professor Emeritus in history at Blue Mountain College, Mississippi, and president of the Blue Mountain Bank. All three speakers provided eloquent testimony, both by word and example, to the achievement possibilities of the blind in the most arduous and skilled professions.

Other well known guest speakers included J. H. Chappell, Rehabilitation Specialist of the Federal Office of Vocational Rehabilitation; Dr. Bernard S. Abrams, prominent optometrist of Columbus, Ohio; Fred Ward, Director of the Cincinnati Farm School for the Blind; W. Howard Patrem, Director of the Indianapolis Board of Industrial Aid and Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind; Norman M. Yoder, District Supervisor, Vocational Rehabilitation Services for the Blind, Department of Public Welfare, Columbus, Ohio; L. P. Howser, Principal of the Kentucky School for the Blind; and F. E. Davis, Superintendent of the American Printing House for the Blind.

Dr. Abrams conducted a six-hour clinic at which he and his assistants examined upwards of seventy convention members to determine whether they could be aided by optical devices. He found that about fifty per cent of them could.

Full reports were given by Mr. A. L. Archibald, Federation executive director, and Mr. David Cobb, Federation attorney, covering: (1) The development of rehabilitation and vending stand legislation in the current session of Congress; (2) progress achieved in opening up the Federal Civil Service to the employment of the blind; (3) legislation proposed by the Federation to clear the way for employment of the blind in private enterprises operating under concession contracts on federal property.

This year's banquet, always a highlight of the convention, witnessed a new and outstanding feature: the presentation of official charters to affiliated state organizations. The charters, which certify to affiliation with the National Federation, were distributed to the 28 state groups present at the convention. The four affiliates which were not in attendance will shortly receive their charters by mail.

The following motions were passed:

1. That the officers of the Federation take such steps as they deem necessary to secure the preparation and publication of a history of the Federation; and that each affiliate be asked to appoint an historian to collect data on the history of the affiliate to be sent to the Federation and otherwise to collaborate with the Federation in carrying this project forward.

2. To appoint a committee to study the recommendations of Dr. Bernard Abrams that the Federation support the creation of a visual rehabilitation center, having the following three functions: (a) analyzing the various occupations as to their visual requirements and placing this information on record for all workers to use in helping their cases; (b) analyzing the various individuals as to their visual capacity under various test conditions, in regards to their ability to perform various vocations; (c) promote research in optical devices for the improvement of these individuals and also to investigate all existing devices as to their true value to the partially sighted.

3. That for the present the temporary membership of the National Federation of the Blind in the National Committee for Research in Eye Diseases and Disabilities be continued and that the president of the Federation be authorized to make the Federation membership permanent or withdraw it altogether as the circumstances seem to him to warrant.

4. That the officers prepare resolutions: (a) urging the secretary of HEW and all other appropriate persons to strengthen and enlarge the Special Section for the Blind in OVR; (b) that the staff of the Special Section be enlarged by the addition of competent blind specialists in each of the various areas of employment: industry, commerce, the professions and agriculture; (c) that a school and demonstration project in agriculture be set up by OVR so as to: facilitate research into the employment possibilities of the blind in agriculture; to train agricultural specialists for employment in state rehabilitation agencies; to train blind persons who wish to enter agricultural pursuits.

A proposal to amend the Federation constitution by requiring that all constitutional amendments be submitted to the affiliates at least sixty days in advance was tabled after brisk discussion.

The total of $1,095 in pledges toward the purchase of a braille mimeograph machine was received on the convention floor, following a report by Ken Jernigan of California which indicated that the machine should be ready within a few months for use in the distribution of braille bulletins by the Federation. A corollary to this report was the informative talk by R. L. Thompson, President of the Florida Federation of the Blind, on the possibilities of voice recordings as a medium for Federation bulletins. The president was directed to appoint a committee of three to continue the investigation of voice recordings for Federation purposes.

First Vice-President George Card gave an unusually good report on the fund raising activities of the Federation through White Cane Week, approval mailings of greeting cards and other methods.

In election held on the final day of the convention, the following officers were unanimously elected: president, Dr. Jacobus tenBroek, California, re-elected for his eighth term; first vice-president, George Card, Wisconsin, re-elected for his fourth term; secretary, Charles Little, Massachusetts, elected for his first term; treasurer, Emil Arndt, Illinois, re-elected for his eighth term. The following were elected to four vacancies on the Executive Committee: Harold Reagan, Kentucky, re-elected; R. L. Thompson, Florida; Earl Scharry, Iowa; Betty Gardner, Michigan. Professor T. Munford Boyd was unanimously elected to the Board of Directors.

Omaha, Nebr., was chosen to be the 1955 convention city of the National Federation, after a rousing floor discussion in which the assembled delegates re-considered last year's choice of San Francisco.

The thorough preparation, tireless labor and unfailing courtesy of all connected with the host affiliate—the Kentucky Federation of the Blind—combined to make this year's convention an occasion to be long and pridefully remembered by all of us who were the beneficiaries of their genuine southern hospitality.

Note: Dr. Robert Fletcher made a tape recording of the entire convention. He will supply a copy of this tape recording for the whole or any part of the convention to Federation affiliates and interested individuals for the cost of the reproduction. Please get in touch with him at his new address: 1223 Jefferson Street, Kalamazoo, Mich.

*Reported by Jacobus tenBroek*

# Necrology

The Rev. Paul Sperry, who in 1897 began activities in the weekly program of literary readings in the "Room for the Blind" in the Library of Congress died on Sept. 3. He continued his interest in the blind throughout most of his life, as director of the National Library for the Blind (now merged with the Division for the Blind, Library of Congress). For 27 years he was pastor of the Church of the Holy City, in Washington, D. C.

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Chauncey McCormick, former trustee of AFB and AFOB, died at his summer home in Maine in early September.

Mr. McCormick was active in many phases of social welfare work. In addition to his service on the boards of both the AFB and the AFOB, he was also a trustee of the Chicago Foundlings Home, and the Alexander Hamilton Memorial Fund. He was a director of the McCormick Theological Seminary, the Chicago Council of Social Agencies, and the Community Fund.

During World War I he served as a captain in the army in France and Poland and after the war was appointed by ex-President Herbert Hoover to the American Relief Commission.

Mr. McCormick was awarded the Purple Heart and the Victory Medal as a result of his army service, and was also awarded a citation by Gen. John J. Pershing. The French government awarded him the Legion of Honor and the Croix de Guerre with bronze star.

A native of Chicago, Mr. McCormick was the grandson of the founder of the McCormick farm machinery firm. He was buried at Wheaton, Ill.

Exhibit at Houseparent's Meeting in Oregon School, 1954

# First Northwest Houseparents Meeting

HOUSEPARENTS FROM three schools for the blind in the northwestern part of the United States with personnel from other schools for handicapped children in the area convened at Salem, Oregon, September 8-10, for the purpose of improving their services to handicapped children. These houseparents came from the Oregon School for the Blind, the Washington School for the Blind, and the School for the Blind, Vancouver, British Columbia.

This conference was planned and conducted by the Oregon State School for the Blind and co-sponsored by the American Foundation for the Blind. Mr. Walter R. Dry, superintendent of the school, and Mr. Everett Wilcox, principal, were responsible for the planning of the conference and for the selection of the speakers. The Foundation gave them financial support in providing fees for the lecturers and transportation for the participants who came from outside the state of Oregon.

One of the most interesting phases of the conference was the fact that representatives from schools for the blind, the deaf, mentally retarded, and delinquent children found that they could share with each other many of their experiences as well as their problems.

The staff members in attendance throughout the conference were: Mr.

Dry and Mr. Wilcox, and Miss Georgie Lee Abel, Consultant in Education, American Foundation for the Blind. In addition to the help offered by these people in the specific area of service to blind children, contributions were most helpful from Mrs. Emma Rasmussen, a former houseparent in both the Washington and Oregon state schools for the blind; from Mrs. Marion Grew, superintendent of the Washington State School for the Blind; from Miss Effie Westensee, teacher at the Oregon State School for the Blind; and from Miss Mollie Vlasnik, Consultant, Preschool Blind Children, State of Oregon.

Among the outstanding lecturers in addition to the specialists in the education of blind children were: Dr. Ruth Jens, Psychiatrist, Oregon State Hospital, Salem, Oregon, who discussed the importance of communication in our understanding of our role in our work with children who live in institutions, and our own feelings for the children whom we serve. She gave many practical suggestions in answer to specific questions which the participants presented at the meeting. Mr. Don Miller, Supervisor of Foster Care, McLaren School for Boys, Woodburn, Oregon, drew heavily on his experience with delinquent boys. He was especially helpful to the group in his understanding of their problems since he had had experience as a houseparent and as a worker with houseparents. Dr. Irvin B. Hill, Superintendent, Fairview Home for Children, Salem, Oregon, was most helpful in his discussions directed to the houseparents in their concern for the health needs of their children as to diet, safety, comfort, and various phases of mental hygiene.

The Oregon State School for the Blind contributed in making the attendance at the conference a success and in their desire to contribute to the happiness and comfort of the guests. The personnel of the Washington State School for the Blind co-operated to the extent of having all of their houseparents in attendance and their teachers at various meetings. This workshop was an excellent example of two schools co-operating in an educational venture and sharing it with others from related areas of services to handicapped children.

## Current Literature

✪ "Public Assistance and Social Insurance—a Normative Evaluation" in UCLA *Law Review*, Vol. 1, No. 3, Jacobus tenBroek and Richard B. Wilson; (an analysis of social insurance and public assistance.) Copies may be obtained from Prof. J. tenBroek, 3118 Dwinelle Hall, U. of C., Berkeley, Calif.

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It seems pertinent from time to time to report on foreign language publications relating to blindness. Below is a selected list of such publications that have recently come to our attention.

*In German:*

✪ *Einblicke in die Psyche des Blinden*, by Heinz Appenzeller, Zürich, Energetica-Verlag, 1952. (A Glance into the Mind of the Blind.) A deeper and more complete report of the study published in 1951 entitled "Einblicke in die Welt des Blinden."

✪ *Einblicke in die Welt des Blinden*, by Heinz Appenzeller, Zürich, Energetica-Verlag, 1951. (A Glance into the World of the Blind.) Discussion of the problems of blindness and adjustment to

them. Includes poems on blindness by Milton, Kästner, and others.

✪ *Festschrift zum fünfundsiebzigjährigen Bestehen,* Berlin, Blindenanstalt von Berlin, 1953. (Publication in Honor of the 75th Anniversary of the Institute for the Blind.) Gives facts and figures about the Institute and its work, and about the occupations and interests of the blind. Two poems are included, also a number of illustrations.

✪ *Kriegsblinden Jahrbuch, 1954,* Weisbaden, Bund der Kriegsblinden Deutschlands, 1954. (Yearbook of the Association of the War-Blind, 1954.) Contents include: the aims of organizations for German war-blind, their employment, their future, their activities, their messages to the seeing. Has many illustrations.

✪ *Schweigt Gott? Erlebnisse eines ostvertriebenen Kriegsblinden,* by Ernst Giese, Altdorf bei Nürnberg, Christlicher Verlag Fritz Pranz, 195-? 2. Edition. (Is God Silent? Experiences of an Eastern Zone War-Blinded Exile.)

✪ *Der Blinde in der österreichischen Wirtschaft und Verwaltung,* arranged by Erich Indrasé, Wien, Österreichischen Blindenverband, 1952. (The Blind in the Austrian Economy and Administration.) A report with evaluation and recommendations regarding work possibilities for the blind.

✪ *Blindheit und Technik,* by Dr. Otto Meyer, Zürich, Energetica-Verlag, 1953. (Blindness and Industrial Occupations.) Discusses potential occupations for the blind in industry, their sociological and physiological aspects, tactical and acoustical elements, etc.

✪ *Das Blindenhandwerk in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik,* by Dr. Walter Warnecke, Leipzig, Deutsche Zentral-bücherei fur Blinde zü Leipzig, 1952. (The Blind as Craftsmen in the German Democratic Republic. [Eastern Zone]) Reports on the economic and sociological problems of the disposal of blindmade products, tax regulation, subsidizing, standardization, etc.

✪ *Dein Dunkel wird sein wie der Mittag,* by Max Wedemeyer, Gütersloh, Rufer-Verlag, 1952. (Your Darkness Will Be Like Noon.) A novel of a young blind girl whose story is told by her old schoolteacher, her fiancé, her pastor and herself.

✪ *Strömender Kreis,* by Erich Lotz, Gütersloh, Rufer-Verlag, 1954. Subtitle: "The Story of a Life." Biographical story of a war-blinded veteran of the First World War, his return to normal living, and his progress in the study of theology until he reaches his goal as a minister.

✪ *Wie erziehe ich mein blindes Kind?* Edited by Wilhelm Heimers, Hannover-Kirchrode, Verein zur Förderung der Blindenbildung e.V., 1953. (How Do I Bring Up My Blind Child?) Sub-title: "A Primer for the Training of Blind Children." Addressed to mothers of blind children, this illustrated 82-page book outlines the normal progress to expect, and gives concrete suggestions for the training of blind children at home and in school.

✪ *Von Vives bis Haüy,* by Alfred Mell, Hannover-Kirchrode, Verein zur Förderung der Blindenbildung, 1952. (From Vives to Haüy.) Sub-title: "Documents and Opinions, along with the Early History of the Education of the Blind."

*In French:*

✪ "La Readaptation des Femmes Aveugles a la Vie Domestique," by

Marthe Henri, reprinted from *La Canne Blanche* of Brussels, 1953. (The Readaptation of Blind Women to Domestic Life.) This practical article discusses cooking, sewing, motherhood, selection of clothes, etc.

*In Spanish:*

○ "La Psicotecnia en el Trabajo de los Ciegos," by José Plata Gutiérrez, *Revista de Psicologia General y Aplicada*, V.VI, No. 17, enero-Marzo 1951. (Psychotechnics in Work with the Blind.) The author stresses that psychotechnical problems of work with the blind, such as the development of substitutes for vision, scientific study and organization of work methods for the blind, etc., are of such specific nature that special psychotechnic laboratories devoted to the solution of these problems are needed.

This is one of a series of articles by this author, others of which are:

○ "Exprésion de las Imágenes Tactíles de los Ciegos por Medio del Modelado," *Revista de psicologia General y Aplicada*, V.V, No. 15, Julio-Septiembre 1950. (Tactile Imagery of the Blind through the Medium of Modeling.)

○ "La Sensibilidad Tactil de los Ciegos en Relación con le de los Videntes," *Psicotecnia*, V.2, 1941. (The Tactile Sensitivity of the Blind Compared with That of Seeing Persons.)

○ "El Tacto de los Ciegos en la Localización de Puntos en el Espacio," *Revista de Psicologia General y Aplicada*, V.I., No. 2, Julio-Diciembre 1946. (The Touch of the Blind in the Localization of Points in Space.)

○ "La Capacidad de los Ciegos para la Sintesis Imaginativa Espacial," *Revista de Psicologia General y Aplicada*, 3, 1948. (The Capacity of the Blind for Imaginative Spacial Analysis.)

○ "Sobre la Relación entre los Conocimientos Senso-Tactíles del Ciego y los Optico-Tactíles del Vidente," *Psicotecnia*, 3, 1942. (An Investigation of the Relation between the Tactual Cognition of the Blind and the Visual-Tactual Cognition of Seeing Persons.)

## APPOINTMENTS

○ Robert H. Barnhart has been appointed the first supervisor of Kansas' vocational rehabilitation program for the blind, according to Harry Hayes, Division of Services to the Blind director.

The rehabilitation program, as now organized includes job placement, personal adjustment, training, vocational training, counseling, providing occupational tools and equipment to rehabilitation clients, and restoration of sight. The program has been under the personal supervision of Mr. Hayes but has grown to such a degree that it was necessary to appoint a full time supervisor.

Mr. Barnhart held the same position with the Tennessee Division of Services for the Blind for five years before going to Kansas. Prior to that he was chief of special rehabilitation procedures for the Veterans Administration at Atlanta, Ga., supervising the VA program in five southeastern states.

○ The Connecticut Board of Education of the Blind announces that Albert N. Sherberg of Edgewood, Rhode Island, has been named to the position of executive secretary effective Aug. 1, 1954.

Albert N. Sherberg

A native of Providence, the new executive secretary, who is 55 years old, attended public schools there and in suburban Cranston. In 1923 he received a Ph.B. degree from Brown University where he later earned a Master of Arts degree in psychology. After three years as a student at Hartford Seminary Foundation in Connecticut, he received his degree from that institution in 1926.

With a New England background in the Congregational ministry, Mr. Sherberg has served more recently on the staffs of charitable and fund-raising organizations.

After a summer of resident clinical training in counseling at the Massachusetts General Hospital in 1944, he worked in this capacity on a part-time basis for five years at St. Luke's General Hospital in New Bedford, Mass. From February 1, 1950 to January 1, 1951, he was executive secretary of the Rhode Island Association for the Blind.

Mr. Sherberg is married and the father of two grown daughters. He and his wife moved to Hartford in July.

In assuming this important post, Mr. Sherberg becomes leader of the oldest state commission for the blind as successor to Stetson K. Ryan, a tribute to whose notable services appeared in the September issue of the *New Outlook*.

## IN THIS ISSUE

DR. JANE HALLENBECK is a graduate of Syracuse University College of Medicine. After one year of rotating internship, she spent four and a half years in the Child Psychiatry Department of the Massachusetts General Hospital at Boston. Her findings are particularly significant in the light of the fact that the diagnosis of retrolental fibroplasia has called attention to an increasing number of prematurely born children growing up with little or no useful vision, thus presenting, perhaps, new situations to those persons interested in services to young children with a severe visual loss. Dr. Hallenbeck has just returned from a two-year visit to Germany and soon expects to be working part-time in a small clinic. The rest of her time, she says, will be spent raising her two little children.

BRUCE MCCARTY AND PHILIP WORCHEL, Ph.D., collaborated in Texas on the study which is presented here. Mr. McCarty graduated from Baylor University with a degree in psychology and zoology, in 1949, after service in the U. S. Army Air Corps. He then did his graduate work and received his Master's degree from the University of

Texas, and meantime has been doing educational therapy work and teaching sciences in a number of institutions and schools. Dr. Philip Worchel is professor of psychology and Director of clinical training at the University of Texas. He is a consultant in clinical psychology to the Veterans Administration, and National Vice President for the Southern Region of Psi Chi, a national honorary psychology fraternity. Dr. Worchel has published numerous articles on research with the blind. His Ph.D. degree is from Cornell University, in experimental psychology. His undergraduate work was done at City College in New York, and his M. A. degree is from Teachers College, Columbia University.

DR. JACOBUS TENBROEK is president of the National Federation of the Blind, and also associate professor at the University of California at Berkeley. He is also a member of the California State Social Welfare Board. His most recent contribution to the *New Outlook* was "Proposal for a Fixed Grant to the Blind and Related Constructive Changes" published in the November, 1953 issue.

ONE OF THE U. S. delegates to the International Conference on Braille Music, held in Paris the past summer, was Harry J. Ditzler, Director of Music at the New Mexico School for the Visually Handicapped at Alamogordo. Mr. Ditzler reports on the meeting in an interesting way that gives the reader a first-hand appreciation of the conference's problems and achievements.

**Changes of Address and Renewals**

**Subscribers are urged to send in their change of address at least 30 days before the effective date to assure regular delivery of the magazine. Send all changes of address and renewals to Miss Margaret Fay, Circulation Manager, New Outlook for the Blind, American Foundation for the Blind, 15 West 16th St., N.Y.C. 11.**

## CLASSIFIED CORNER

MEDICAL SOCIAL WORKER WANTED: An expanding program of services to the handicapped people in Dayton and Montgomery County, Ohio, makes necessary the addition of a medical social worker. Worker will work in an integrated program with all types of handicaps, including the blind, with a well-rounded team of therapists and specialists. Starting salary is $4,200 yearly. Working conditions include 40 hour week, two weeks vacation, sick leave, etc. Must have car. Interested medical social workers please write for further information to William D. Lakin, Director, Rehabilitation and Personnel Services, Goodwill Industries of Dayton, 201 West Fifth Street, Dayton 2, Ohio.

AN OPEN EXAMINATION FOR WOMEN will be announced in the near future for a Home Industries Supervisor for the Connecticut State Board of Education of the Blind. Responsibilities will cover selecting articles suitable for home production, controlling purchase of materials and inventory of goods, and organizing public sales. Applications for the examination may be made to the Board of Education of the Blind, Room G-4, or to State Personnel Dept. Room 405, State Office Building, Hartford, Conn.

POSITION WANTED: Either as an instructor or foreman in large workshop. 8 years experience as instructor in weaving department. Write for additional details to *New Outlook*, Box 10-D.

POSITION WANTED: In an agency where both home teaching and case work skills are needed. Applicant is a blind woman with Grade II Home Teaching Certificate and additional education as well as several years experience in the field. Write *New Outlook* Box 8-D.

POSITION WANTED: Social worker with professional experience in case work, group work, and education, seeking position with agency, or institution for the blind. Write *New Outlook* Box 9-D.

POSITION DESIRED: Young man (blind) desires a position as rehabilitation or employment counselor, or home teacher with some agency for the blind. Will also consider teaching positions. Experienced high school teacher and worker with the blind. Applicant holds B.A. degree in social sciences and also holds a LL.B. degree. Write Box 6-D *New Outlook for the Blind.*

HOME TEACHING position wanted. Young woman 25, single, graduate Howard University. Re-

cently received Class II teaching certification. Some work experience as home teacher with Miami Lighthouse, Florida Council for the Blind, Tampa Lighthouse. Totally blind; travel easily with white cane. Box 11-D., *New Outlook*.

HELP WANTED. College graduate, perferably knowledge some phase work for the blind, adaptability in variety activities—mechanical-literary including braille, committed to service in specialized form. Box 12-D., *New Outlook*.


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